

Message Text

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14-L
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NSC-05 PM-04 SP-02 L-03 INR-07

CIAE-00 A-01 SY-05 PER-01 OC-05 CCO-00 SCA-01 CPR-01

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R 040537Z NOV 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5550
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
CINCPAC
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 6147

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, PINS, LA, US, FR, AS, UK
SUBJECT: FURTHER "SECURITY" HARASSMENT OF VIENTIANE
DIPLOMATIC CORPS

REF: A) VIENTIANE 6104 (NOTAL)
B) VIENTIANE 6111 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. THE REGIME CONTINUES TO AGITATE AND PROPAGANDIZE
THE VIENTIANE POPULATION UTILIZING "SECURITY" ROADBLOCKS
TO HARASS THE POPULATION INCLUDING THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS
AND ACTUALLY DETAINING AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT AND ARRESTING
AND CONFINING FRENCH AND WEST GERMAN DIPLOMATS IN THE
GENERAL CONFUSION. MORE INCIDENTS AND, WE SUPPOSE,
ACCIDENTS, ARE TO BE EXPECTED. END SUMMARY

1. REFTELS DESCRIBED THE PROBLEM WE HAD ON FRIDAY,
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OCTOBER 31 WHEN VARIOUS LAO SECURITY PERSONNEL SURROUNDED

THIRD SECRETARY ANDERS IN HIS HOUSE AFTER HE HAD ALLEGEDLY FAILED TO GET OUT OF HIS CAR AT ONE OF THE NUMEROUS ROADBLOCKS SET UP IN VIENTIANE. IT TOOK US ALL DAY TO GET THE GUARDS REMOVED AND ANDERS' "DETENTION" IN HIS HOUSE ENDED. WE THOUGHT WE HAD TROUBLES BUT IT NOW APPEARS THAT OUR FRENCH AND WEST GERMAN COLLEAGUES HAD WORSE ONES AND SOME OTHER FOREIGN DIPLOMATS HAD LESSER ONES.

2. FRENCH CHARGE LAMBERT TOLD ME NOVEMBER 3 THAT A NEWLY ARRIVED DIPLOMATIC OFFICER AND HIS WIFE WERE ARRESTED NOVEMBER 1 AND SPENT TWO NIGHTS IN A VIENTIANE JAIL BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN THEIR RELEASE. LAMBERT WOULD NOT TELL ME THEIR NAMES BUT WE HAVE SINCE DETERMINED THAT THEY WERE PRESS ATTACHE CHRISTOPHE NAIGEON AND HIS WIFE. ARRESTED AND CONFINED WITH THEM WAS DR. MICHAEL BURISH, A WEST GERMAN ASSIGNED AS AN ADVISER TO THE MINISTRY OF PLAN. THE NAIGEONS AND BURISH WERE ARRESTED FOR TRESPASSING ON THE AFTERNOON OF NOV 1. WHEN THEY ENTERED AND INSPECTED AN APPARENTLY EMPTY HOUSE BELONGING TO ONE OF THE SANANIKONES WHICH THEY THOUGHT WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR RENTAL BY THE NAIGEONS. IT WAS, IN FACT, A PL BILLET.

"XAT LAO", "VIENTIANE MAI" AND "OFFICE DE TRADUCTION LAO," ON NOVEMBER 4, ALL QUOTED SIMUONG DOUANGKEO OF THE VIENTIANE POLICE TO THE EFFECT THAT ALL THREE HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM LAOS. HOWEVER, ALL THREE REMAIN IN VIENTIANE AND NEITHER EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED ANY WORD ABOUT EXPULSION.

3. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT TWO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY STAFF MEMBERS HAD THEIR FOREIGN MINISTRY ID CARDS CONFISCATED WHEN THEY PRESENTED THEM AT A ROADBLOCK. OUR BRITISH COLLEAGUES ARE ALSO ENCOUNTERING THE ROADBLOCKS BUT HAVE HAD NO PARTICULAR PROBLEM AS YET.

4. LAMBERT EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE LAO AUTHORITIES WERE NOT DELIBERATELY ATTEMPTING TO HARASS THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS BUT THAT ACTIONS OF VARIOUS POPULAR

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"SECURITY" ELEMENTS WERE CONSEQUENCES OF A DELIBERATE REGIME DECISION TO "MOBILIZE" THE POPULATION. FRENCH GENERAL KOPF, ALSO PRESENT, NOTED THAT A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WERE CLUTCHING AUTOMATIC WEAPONS WITH THEIR FINGERS ON THE TRIGGERS AT THE MANY ROADBLOCKS AND SUGGESTED ACCIDENTS WERE LIKELY TO OCCUR. EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER OBSERVED THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE AT ONE ROADBLOCK WERE FIRING IN THE AIR RATHER FREELY

THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 3.

5. NAKKHALA SOUVANNAVONG, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, ALSO PRESENT, SAID HE AND PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES WERE HAVING SOME SUCCESS IN PERSUADING SOUBANH SRITHIRATH TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE IN DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN THE MIDST OF THE CURRENT "SECURITY" ORGY. NAKKHALA ALSO REMARKED THAT SOME PATHET LAO CADRES HAD BEEN CAUGHT UP IN ROADBLOCK INCIDENTS AND TREATED LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. HE THOUGHT THAT THESE EXPERIENCES WOULD ENCOURAGE MODERATION.

6. COMMENT: SOUBANH AND OTHER CADRES MAY BE GETTING SOME ON-THE-JOB TRAINING IN DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES BUT I REMAIN UNCONVINCED FOR THE MOMENT THAT THEY ARE INCLINING TOWARD MODERATION. THE CURRENT HARASSMENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY ELSE IS THE DIRECT RESULT OF THE REGIME'S AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA AMONG UNSOPHISTICATED ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION IN PURSUIT OF SOME CRUDE TEXT BOOK CONCEPT OF HOW TO CONSOLIDATE A REVOLUTION. MORE INCIDENTS AND, WE SUPPOSE, ACCIDENTS, MAY BE EXPECTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, POLICE FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENTI06147
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750382-0227
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751178/aaaacsx.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 VIENTIANE 6104
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <15 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER "SECURITY" HARASSMENT OF VIENTIANE DIPLOMATIC CORPS
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, PINS, LA, US, FR, AS, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006